

Test Taking Tips

General Guidelines

1. Make sure you are well rested. Testing experts say that the most sensible preparation for an examination is a good night's sleep. Fatigue is recognized as one of the most serious deterrents to successful test performance. Try to arrange your schedule to get a full night of sleep before the examination.
2. On the day of the exam, leave early to get to the testing site. Give yourself at least 30 extra minutes to ensure that you arrive on time, calm and unhurried. **Please note that if you arrive late at the testing site, you will not be permitted to take the examination.** Arriving early will enable you to take a moment to relax and reduce your anxiety. This brief time period will boost your confidence and give you time to think positive thoughts and focus your mind.
3. Listen attentively to all testing instructions. The more information you have about the examination process the more confident you will feel while taking the exam. Listen specifically for information about how to fill in your answer sheet. If you fill in your identification number incorrectly on the answer sheet, the computer will not be able to score your exam. Listen for instructions about how much time you will be given to complete the exam and what to do when you are finished.
4. Plan how you will use the time for the test. Bring your watch and pay close attention to the passing time. Follow your own pace and do not let the pace of others cause you to become nervous. Be confident in your plan for completing the test on time.
5. Read all directions very carefully, looking for specific instructions on how to proceed. Watch for details.
6. Keep a steady pace and do not let more difficult questions affect your attitude and steal your valuable time. Candidates often cloud their minds by lingering over difficult questions. Moving on and finding success with other questions is a better method.
7. Rely on your knowledge and don't watch for patterns. Noticing that the last four answers are "c" is not a good reason to change an answer. It is better to trust knowledge to help you answer the questions.
8. Change answers only when you are certain. The answer which comes to mind first is often correct. Reviewing with an anxious mind and changing answers when you are not certain can do more harm than good.
9. When you have completed your test, use the remaining time effectively. Review the difficult questions you have left. Make sure you answered all questions.

Guidelines for Answering True-false Questions

1. When you do not know or can't remember information, assume the answer is true. There are generally more true questions on true-false tests because instructors tend to emphasize true questions. If there is specific information in the statement, it may also tend to be true. For example, the statement "There are 980 endangered species worldwide" has specific information and is likely to be true.
2. Carefully read each question, looking for any factor that will make it false. Candidates often read the question and see part of it is true and assume that the entire statement is true.
3. Look for words that tend to make the question false. Words such as always, all, never, or only make it more likely that the question is false. A more complete list of these words follows.

All	none	best	absolutely
Always	never	worst	absolutely not
Only	nobody	everybody	certainly
Invariably	no one	everyone	certainly not

4. Identify words that tend to make the question true. Words such as seldom, often and many will more likely make the question true. A more complete list of these words follows.

usually	frequently	often	sometimes
Some	seldom	many	much
probably	a majority	apt to	most
Might	a few	may	unlikely

5. Watch out for negative words and how they may affect the answer. Statements containing negative words may be true or false but you must see them to make that determination. Words beginning with un-, im- and miss- will alter the meaning of the statement.
6. Questions that state a reason tend to be false. Words such as since, because, when and if will tend to make the statement false.

Guidelines for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Read each question with the intention of answering the question without the alternatives which follow. Focus on finding an answer without the help of the alternatives. This will increase your concentration and help you read the question more clearly.
2. Use the process of elimination when you do not know the answer for sure. Eliminate two alternatives quickly and then make the decision between the two remaining. This increases your probability to 50/50. Another helpful method of elimination is to use the true-false methods described in the previous set of guidelines. When you can determine a likely false alternative, eliminate it. The true-false elimination method is particularly helpful when more than one answer is possibly true.
3. When numbers are in each alternative, choose the numbers that are in the middle range, not the extremes. For example, if the height of Cascade Mountain is requested, eliminate 20,000 feet, and 3,000 feet. Then choose between 8,000 feet and 11,000 feet. Remember, the best results are obtained when you have studied and know the exact answer is 11,000 feet.
4. Choose answers that are longer and more descriptive. These answers stand out from the others.
5. When two very similar answers appear, it is likely that one of them is the correct choice. Test makers often disguise the correct option by giving another option that looks very much like the correct one.
6. Watch out for negative words in the instructions or in the main question. You may have been told to select an option that is not true. Remember to reverse your procedure and eliminate truth, not falsehood. When looking for negative options look for extreme modifiers that make them false (always, never, all, etc.)

Guidelines for Answering Matching Questions

1. Examine both lists to determine the types of items and their relationships. The test maker uses many terms or a large number of facts on a matching type test to discover if you have mastered a subject. There are usually two lists that need to be matched. Take a look at both lists to get a feel for the relationships and build your confidence.
2. Use one list as a starting point and go through the second list to find a match. This process organizes your thinking. It will also speed your answers because you become familiar with the second list and will be able to go straight to a match that you saw when looking through the lists a previous time.
3. Move through the entire list before selecting a match. If you make a match with the first likely answer, you may make an error, because an answer later in the list may be more correct.
4. Cross off items on the second list when you are certain that you have a match. This seems simplistic, but it helps you feel confident and stay organized.
5. Do not guess until all absolute matches have been made. If you guess early in the process, you will likely eliminate an answer that could be used correctly for a later choice.

Guidelines for Answering Sentence Completion or Fill-in-the-blank Questions

1. Read the question with the intent to give an answer and make the sentence grammatically correct. In this process it is important to focus on how the sentence is written. For example, if the blank is preceded by the article "an" you know the word that goes in the blank must start with a vowel.
2. Concentrate on the number of blanks in the sentence and the length of the space. The test maker is giving you clues to the answer by adding spaces and making them longer.

Guidelines for Essay Questions

1. Organize your thoughts before you begin to write. A short outline on a separate piece of paper will improve your thinking. There is usually a main idea or issue, several supporting issues and examples to illustrate the issues.
2. Paraphrase the original question to form your introductory statement. This helps you get the question straight in your mind.
3. Write your answer clearly, so the reader will be able to decode your writing and understand your ideas. Without clearly written words your chances of a good grade are severely diminished. Write or print clearly, using a dark-colored ballpoint pen.
4. Read each essay question with the intent to identify the verbs or words that give you direction. These are the verbs that describe the task you are expected to complete. Circle the direction verbs in the question to make sure that you are focusing on the desired task. Sample direction verbs or adjectives, and their generally intended action or task, are listed below

Direction *verbs* that ask you to *review an idea or concept* in your own words:
summarize, survey, discuss, explain

Direction *verbs* that ask for a *set of items or ideas* that were presented in lecture or reading. These action words generally require more precise wording of items by giving numbers or steps:
trace, outline, list, diagram, solve

Direction *verbs* that ask you to *speak in favor* of a concept or give the reasons why it should be accepted as valid:
defend, argue, debate, contend, justify

Direction *verbs* that ask for a *specific meaning* or picture of a concept:
define, clarify, describe, depict, illustrate

Direction *verbs* that ask you to show *differences* in several ideas or situations:
contrast, compare, distinguish, differentiate

Direction *adjectives* that ask for *specific information* the instructor considers important:
significant, critical, key, important, major, principal, essential, vital

5. Use the principles of good English composition when answering all types of essay questions. Form a clear thesis statement (statement of purpose) and place it as near to the beginning as possible.

Access the following websites for additional testing information and study guide materials.

Las Vegas Clark County Library District

www.lvcclld.org/ref_info/info_guides/tests.htm

Hot Jobs

www.911hotjobs.com/bookstore/testcenter.htm

Public Service Employees Network

www.pse-net.com/library.htm